Accountability Report

2015–2016

Public Service Commission

NOVA SCOTIA

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Accountability Statement

The Accountability Report of the Public Service Commission for the year ended March 31, 2016 is prepared pursuant to the Finance Act and government policies and guidelines. These authorities require the reporting of outcomes against the Public Service Commission Statement of Mandate for the fiscal year just ended. The reporting of the Public Service Commission outcomes necessarily includes estimates, judgments and opinions by Public Service Commission management.

We acknowledge that this Accountability Report is the responsibility of Public Service Commission management. The report is, to the extent possible, a complete and accurate representation of outcomes relative to the goals and priorities set out in the Public Service Commission 2015-2016 Statement of Mandate.

Public Service Commission

Original signed by

The Honourable Labi Kousoulis
Minister

Original signed by

Laura Lee Langley
Commissioner

Message from the Minister and Public Service Commissioner

Thank you for taking the time to read the Public Service Commission's (PSC) 2015-16 Accountability Report. We are pleased to highlight the PSC's achievements from the past year – achievements that have reinforced our commitment to service delivery and client relations across government.

In 2015-16, we took great strides in promoting diversity, inclusion and employee engagement throughout the public service.

We introduced "Experience Through Opportunity" to foster increased employment opportunities for younger workers. By removing barriers for workers 35-years-old and younger, we helped hundreds of young people get a foot in the door and land good jobs in the public service.

We also concentrated on promoting diversity and social equity in the public service, while working to ensure all government employees felt secure in bringing their whole selves to work. By introducing our Guidelines to Support Gender Variant Employees, we became the first public service in Canada to implement such rules. This is something we can all be proud of, as public servants and as Nova Scotians.

A major focus over the past year was to learn more about the people who make up the Nova Scotia public service. To do this, we developed a new employee census, "Count Yourself In." The information collected through the census will inform human resource planning, programs, and supports that best reflect employee needs.

The steps we have taken to strengthen our corporate diversity and employee engagement will result in improved support and services to our clients. We remain committed to responding to the needs of all government employees and departments and we look forward to seeing the improvements that will develop as a result of our achievements over the past year.

Our aim is to create a workplace culture of diversity and inclusion, one that represents the diverse people and communities we serve. Initiatives such as those we have outlined will help us achieve this, and we look forward to working with all of you to achieve our goals.

Sincerely,

Original signed by

The Honourable Labi Kousoulis
Minister

Original signed by

Laura Lee Langley
Commissioner

Introduction

The Government of Nova Scotia is committed to being open and accountable. Annual statements of mandate and accountability reports are essential tools for government departments, agencies and concerned stakeholders to assess organizational performance.

As the corporate human resources (HR) service provider for government, the PSC is responsible for corporate HR policies, programs and services that assist all government departments in meeting their respective HR goals.

This annual Accountability Report for the Nova Scotia Public Service Commission (PSC) is based on the progress of our strategic actions set out in the PSC's 2015-2016 Statement of Mandate, which is available here: http://novascotia.ca/government/accountability/2015-2016/2015-2016-PSC-Statement-of-Mandate.pdf.

In both establishing and working towards these goals and priorities, the PSC is guided by its mandate, vision, and mission. In 2015-2016, the PSC's mandate, vision, and mission were as follows:

- Mandate: To ensure that the Nova Scotia government has the human resources required to create and deliver high quality programs and services to citizens.
- Vision: Inspired, client-focused professionals delivering innovative HR programs to advance employee engagement and the work of the Nova Scotia public service.
- Mission: To deliver solutions that create and sustain an engaged workforce.

Our two main outcomes remain unchanged:

- An engaged, productive workforce to support government's priority goals.
- Improved client service delivery through accountability and engagement.

Financial Results

Public Service Commission			
	2015-2016 Estimate	2015-2016 Actual	Variance Actual to Estimate Over/(Under)
Program & Service Area	($thousands)	($thousands)	($thousands)
Gross Departmental Expenses			
Client Service Delivery	9,342.0	8,776.2	(565.8)
Employee Relations	1,259.0	1,173.6	(85.4)
Office of the Commissioner	492.0	455.3	(36.7)
Public Service Renewal	2,983.0	2,661.4	(321.6)
Strategy & System Performance	4,915.0	5,232.8	317.8
Total Gross Departmental Expenses	18,991.0	18,299.3	(691.7)
Additional Information:			
Fees and Other Charges	0	0	0
Ordinary Recoveries	(19.0)	(31.9)	12.9
TCA Purchase Requirements	0	0	0
Provincial Funded Staff (FTEs)	189.4	184.6	(4.8)

Measuring our Performance

For each of the two main outcomes based on our 2015-2016 Statement of Mandate, the PSC identified actions, performance measures and targets to provide evidence that an activity/ program is achieving its intended outcome.

Overall, the PSC has made a great deal of progress on our two main outcomes. Progress on the first outcome "*Engaged, productive workforce to support government's priority needs*" is evident through the implementation of actions and recommendations from two of our main corporate strategies: "*Raising the Bar*" diversity and inclusion strategy and the "*Pride in the Public Service*" employee engagement strategy.

Various projects and initiatives stemming from these strategies included: the implementation of the PSC's first ever "Count Yourself In" Workforce Census to measure the make-up of our public service; focused efforts on creating flexible work options for public service employees; and the participation of approximately 1,500 employees in psychological health and safety training through "The Working Mind" workshops.

The PSC also implemented a new Short Term Illness Support Program. The new program offers an innovative and comprehensive approach to case management that provides optimal support to our employees to help them recover and stay connected to the workplace. We can now gather data that will assist us in managing our absence and illness benefits more effectively and efficiently. Early indicators for the first three quarters of 2015-2016 show us that progress is being made. Absence time due to short term illness has dropped by 12 per cent since the introduction of this program when compared to the previous year.

Regarding our second outcome "*Improved client service through accountability and engagement*" the PSC has been modernizing and streamlining our new service delivery model. Implementing this new model has created efficiencies in our processes and services. Its benefits go beyond the past fiscal year, as it will enable us to keep our processes lean and make it easier for our PSC employees and clients to do business.

In support of this outcome, in September 2015, the PSC launched MyHR, an online platform for employees and managers to access human resource related information and resources anytime they need. By leveraging our technology and updating our structure, we are able to better serve our clients.

Additionally, in 2015-2016, the PSC focused efforts on increasing opportunities and removing barriers for younger and less-experienced workers looking to enter the public service. Initiatives such as "Experience through Opportunity," and the development of a new corporate website called "Make it Here," helped to create awareness and promote employment opportunities. We are also promoting diversity and social equity by removing barriers for those from underrepresented groups.

These are just a few of the many initiatives and programs launched in 2015-2016 that demonstrate our progress in achieving our two main outcomes. The rest of this section will outline the specific progress made on each action followed by tables analyzing the results of each performance measure as indicated in our 2015-2016 Statement of Mandate.

Progress on Outcome: *Engaged, productive workforce to support government's priority needs*

The following are project status updates for each strategic action listed under the outcome, "*Engaged, productive workforce to support government's priority goals*" in the 2015-2016 Statement of Mandate.

Corporate-focused strategic actions:

Engage in negotiations with the NSGEU (Nova Scotia Government and General Employees Union), CUPE (Canadian Union of Public Employees), and NS Crown Attorney Association as employment agreement/collective agreements expired during the previous fiscal year (2014-2015).

- This work is ongoing – Much progress has been made with more work to be done. All three unions have been engaged in negotiations during the 2015-2016 fiscal year. A tentative agreement with Nova Scotia General Employees Union (NSGEU) was reached in November 2015. NSGEU has yet to vote on the tentative agreement. There is no timeline for a vote. An agreement was reached with the Crown Attorneys Association and ratified in January 2016. The agreement is signed and in place. CUPE remains in conciliation.

In support of the recommendations identified in the Pride in the Public Service corporate employee engagement strategy, the PSC will work with government departments to incorporate the priority areas identified for 2015-2016 into their engagement activities and to guide, enhance and support their engagement activities. These priority areas include promoting and evaluating the PSC's mentoring pilot program, re-launching iConnect (internal corporate intranet site), and support initiatives that reduce risk and promote well-being related to psychological health and safety.

- This work is ongoing – A test case for FlexNS was launched in the Financial Services Delivery Branch of the Internal Services Department with 130 employees and managers participating. The test case allows us to use and evaluate effectiveness of all communication strategies, processes and tools. We are working with the Department of Natural Resources to pilot the program in two of their work units later this year. Other departments have approached us for information on the program.
- All of the mandatory reports for the case study on the National Psychological Health and Safety (PH&S) in the Workplace standard are complete and a final report is expected in August 2016. More than 1,500 employees have participated in the training and it continues to be delivered in departments and regions. Work to reflect PH&S in the

Occupational Health and Safety policy has been completed. Lastly, the PSC's mentoring program is in the evaluation phase and a new internal corporate intranet (formally "iConnect") will be relaunched in the summer of 2016.

In support of the Raising the Bar corporate diversity and inclusion strategy, the PSC will work with departments to implement the strategy's priority recommendations for 2015-2016, which include improving utilization of the "Count Yourself In" survey, and enhancing diversity and inclusion learning and development offerings.

- Complete – Various initiatives fell under this action. They include work on: the "Count Yourself In" workforce census (CYI); updated Respectful Workplace and Diversity and Inclusion training; employee orientation; and exploring ways to increase diversity on hiring panels. The CYI workforce census has been completed with a response rate of more than 50%. Results will be shared in 2016.
- The mandatory diversity training for employees has been re-developed and is currently being delivered. The re-development of Diversity for Leaders is also in initial stages of review, with updates to be finalized during summer 2016. In addition to this work, screening and selection resources have been reviewed and are accessible on the PSC's internal website, MyHR.
- Diversity and inclusion has been integrated into corporate employee orientation programs, including the Manager's Quick Start webinar.

The PSC will create employee development programs that enhance leadership development, talent and succession management, and our ability to retain, attract and build the capacity of employees by using blended learning approaches as appropriate. Examples include a new manager orientation program (Manager Quick Start) and a new coaching model.

- Complete – Evaluations for all new Leadership Development and Employee Orientation programs have been excellent. Learnings from the executive pilot are being incorporated into program planning for fiscal 2016-2017. A targeted new employee orientation was added for the government's youth initiative. Programs will continue to be evaluated and improved in the upcoming year.

PSC-focused strategic action:

Interpret and assess the PSC's 2015 "How's Work Going?" employee survey results and set priorities for our department based on the key identified areas for action in 2015-2016.

- This work is ongoing – The PSC has made a number of improvements with regards to the results from our "How's Work Going?" employee survey. Departmentally, the PSC saw a 23 percentage point increase in its employee engagement score. In 2015-2016, the

management team reviewed the survey results and determined a number of categories in which to focus. In 2016-2017, the PSC Engagement Team will work with leadership to discuss and set priorities for the year.

Performance Measures:

The following performance measures originate from the PSC's "How's Work Going?" biennial employee survey (http://novascotia.ca/psc/employeeCentre/employeeSurvey/). These measures were chosen to indicate progress for the outcome, "an engaged, productive workforce to support government's priority goals" based on the 2015 survey. All of the indices are based on an Employee Engagement Model and common questions first developed in collaboration with nine provinces, three territories and the federal government. All indices are reported on a scale of 0 to 100.

Overall, the results from the 2015 survey indicated that the PSC continues to be an engaged public service with signs of positive improvements in many areas.

Table 1A outlines the corporate (government-wide) results and Table 1B outlines the PSC's departmental results for this outcome.

Corporate results: Engaged, productive workforce to support government's priority goals									
Performance Measure	Corporate Trend Analysis						Fiscal 2015-2016 Target	Measure Carried Forward to 2016-2017	Rationale if measure has not been carried forward
	2006	2007	2009	2011	2013	2015			
Level of Employee Engagement[1]	67	72	74	62	60	60	Increase 2013 results by 5%	Yes	n/a
Talent Capacity Index[2]	n/a	n/a	64	58	48	47	Increase 2013 results by 5%	Yes	n/a
Workplace Culture Index[3]	n/a	n/a	72	61	60	61	Maintain as an area of strength[4] (i.e. 60-74)	Yes	n/a

Table 1A – Corporate performance measures and results

As Table 1A indicates, the results for the corporate indices of employee engagement, talent capacity and workplace culture have remained steady and show some improvements. The PSC remains committed to enhancing employees' engagement through various initiatives planned for 2016-2017 such as the implementation of flexible work options, more training for psychological health and safety, and enhanced learning and development opportunities for employees.

[1] Engagement is defined as the extent to which employees feel connected to, and involved with, their jobs and their organization. The Employee Engagement Index is calculated based on six key indicator questions.

[2] Reports on employees' perceptions of NS Government's ability to attract and develop its human resources. The Index is the average of two key indicator questions relating to opportunities for career growth and advancement, and learning and development opportunities.

[3] Reports on employees' perceptions of the physical, social and organizational environment in which they work. The Index is the average of six key indicator questions relating to co-worker relationships, recognition, employee involvement and innovation, quality work life, and diverse, inclusive and respectful environment.

[4] As defined by the Employee Engagement Inter-jurisdictional Committee: areas of clear strength are percentages that fall within the 75-100% range; areas of strength are percentages that fall within the 60-74% range; areas for improvement fall within the 50-59% range; and areas of concern fall under 50%.

PSC departmental results: Engaged, productive workforce to support government's priority goals									
Performance Measure	PSC Trend Analysis						Fiscal 2015-2016 Target	Measure Carried Forward to 2016-2017	Rationale if measure has not been carried forward
	2006	2007	2009	2011	2013	2015			
Level of Employee Engagement Employee	n/a	83	81	60	52	75	Increase 2013 results by 10%	No	PSC specific actions have been removed from our 2016-2017 business plan to focus on corporate strategic initiatives
Talent Capacity Index	n/a	n/a	n/a	58	40	59	Increase 2013 results to fall within an area of strength[5] (i.e. 60-74)	No	PSC specific actions have been removed from our 2016-2017 business plan to focus on corporate strategic initiatives
Workplace Culture Index	n/a	n/a	n/a	66	64	76	Maintain as an area of strength (i.e. 60-74)	No	PSC specific actions have been removed from our 2016-2017 business plan to focus on corporate strategic initiatives

Table 1B – PSC departmental performance measures and results

In Table 1B, the PSC's departmental results for 2015 increased significantly for all indices. These results demonstrate the PSC's commitment to creating an engaged and productive workforce in order to support government's priority goals.

[5] As defined by the Employee Engagement Inter-jurisdictional Committee: areas of clear strength are percentages that fall within the 75-100% range; areas of strength are percentages that fall within the 60-74% range; areas for improvement fall within the 50-59% range; and areas of concern fall under 50%.

Progress on Outcome: *Improved client service through accountability and engagement*

The following are project status updates for each strategic action listed under the outcome, "*Improved service delivery through accountability and engagement*" in the 2015-2016 Statement of Mandate.

Corporate-focused strategic actions:

Evaluate and assess the impact of our programs and services by developing and implementing the PSC client satisfaction framework and tools, including the client satisfaction survey, during 2015-2016.

- This work is ongoing - Further consultation on the content of the survey tool and ensuring alignment to the PSC's Service Delivery Model has taken place. More activities are required to finalize the design of the survey, obtaining client input to the survey design, review of survey tools options and the use of different survey tools to evaluate client satisfaction. Changes will be completed late in 2016-2017 and the survey tool implemented late 2016-2017 or early 2017-2018.

Implement, communicate and orient employees on the new absence management program/short term illness (STI) support program, which includes Morneau Shepell as our STI support service provider. The new program will be monitored, evaluated, and adjusted to ensure we are meeting the performance standards as included in the service level agreement.

- This work is ongoing – The main elements of the new Short Term Illness (STI) Program have been established. Quarterly and annual reporting is in place and data from those reports is being assessed to determine process and service delivery refinements to the STI and related corporate support programs (e.g. Employee and Family Assistance Program). A review of first year status and program results will be completed by the end of the second quarter of 2016-2017 to confirm program performance is meeting service level agreements and indicate areas for further improvements.

In support of improved client service delivery and engagement, continue to expand, communicate and market MyHR as an online service centre by increasing/maintaining online content and allowing all employees access throughout government.

- This work is ongoing – During the past year, electronic access was established for all employees and managers across government to a wide range of human resource information, creating an online service centre and foundation to Public Service Commission's service delivery model. Availability of a Manager's Service Centre was added in September to provide increased services and access for managers.

Refinements to improve usability of MyHR information were also completed, with additional communications to build awareness for the service.

In support of innovative HR practices, continue the review of corporate HR policies under Management Manual 500, which will include identifying issues and gaps, consulting with subject matter experts and clients, and developing a corporate HR policy plan for the next three years.

- This work is ongoing – Recommendations for the policies in the scope of the review have been developed based on current state assessments, consultation findings, and discussions with policy content owners. The presentation of the recommendations and timelines to PSC Senior Leadership occurred in April. The HR Policy Action Plan is being finalized. The review of corporate HR policies (Manual 500) outlined in the Action Plan will continue in fiscal 2016-2017.

Develop and implement the Youth in the Public Service Strategy, including activities to raise awareness of public service career prospects and creating opportunities for young people to join and develop their careers in the Nova Scotia public service.

- This work is ongoing – During fiscal 2015-2016, the PSC launched a new program titled, "Experience Through Opportunity," which increases opportunities and removes barriers for younger and less-experienced workers looking to enter the public service. In addition, the PSC created a new portal on our government website called "Make it Here" to connect young workers with government programs for education, training and entering the workforce. It also connects employers with supports to hire or train younger and less-experienced workers.
- More than 70 public service positions were made available to younger and less-experienced workers in the fall of 2015. And in March the PSC announced the hiring of more than 150 students for summer jobs. The response for both of these postings has been incredible.
- The Nova Scotia government will also have up to 75 new opportunities throughout the year for co-ops and internships. This is in addition to the positions that some departments have already been posting.
- It was also announced that in each of the next five years, five per cent of new provincial government hires will be younger workers.
- In the past two years, more than 1,200 people age 35 and under started a career with the provincial government.

Support departments in interpreting their 2015 "How's Work Going?" employee survey results by providing enhanced reporting and advice/ideas to improve their engagement strategies.

- This work is ongoing – Corporate results were released in January 2016; we continue to work with departments to help them interpret their results and create their action plans. Resources have been dedicated to this effort.

PSC-focused strategic action:

In support of government's LEAN initiative and building on our new service delivery model, the PSC will continue implementing process improvement recommendations (e.g. recruitment and selection, records management, and data quality).

- This work is ongoing – The Lean Six Sigma team completed analysis of data to support improvements to the Recruiting and Selection process and made recommendations on a list of quick hits that are planned for implementation by May 2016.
- The centralized Recruiting function for the department was implemented on April 1, 2016. Activities to support implementation of a new automated system for recruitment have started and will continue to the third quarter of 2016-2017.
- Substantial progress was made in adopting a roadmap for Records Management and performing file clean-up throughout the department. New file management procedures were established and several recommendations of the Office of the Auditor General were completed.
- Several data quality initiatives progressed, including the cleanup of position information in SAP and continued work on service date information.

Performance Measures:

Table 2 below outlines the measures for the outcome related to improved service delivery through accountability and engagement. All measures are based on the PSC's Client Satisfaction Survey that was administered in 2011. Evaluating and assessing the PSC client satisfaction framework and tools, including the survey, was a strategic action for the 2015-2016 fiscal year. With PSC's new service delivery model, we are now focused on setting service level agreements in consultation with our clients to measure progress on a go forward basis. Therefore, new measures will be identified in 2016-2017.

For all measures, the PSC is working towards increasing or maintaining agreement scores within the area of strength range.[6] Our ultimate targets set for 2015-2016 were carried forward as our new ultimate targets for 2017-2018.

[6] As measured in the PSC Client Satisfaction Survey, agreement scores of 60-100% are categorized as areas of strength.

Outcome: Improved service delivery through accountability and engagement					
Performance Measure (from PSC Client Satisfaction Survey)	No Trend Data Available		Ultimate Targets (2017-2018)	Measure Carried Forward to 2016-2017	Rationale if measure has not been carried forward
	2011 (Baseline)	Fiscal 2015-2016 Target			
% of program areas that scored 60% or above for client's satisfaction with the amount of time it took to get the service they required	36%	Increase to 50%	Increase to be within area of strength range	No	New measures have been determined based on PSC's new service delivery model for 2016-2017
% of program areas that scored 60% or above for clients who feel PSC staff are knowledgeable and competent	71%	Increase to 75%	To maintain as an area of strength	No	New measures have been determined based on PSC's new service delivery model for 2016-2017
Average percentage (index) of clients satisfied with the overall quality of service they received from the PSC	54%	Increase to 60%	Increase to be within area of strength range	No	New measures have been determined based on PSC's new service delivery model for 2016-2017

Table 2 Performance Measures for Outcome: Improved service delivery through accountability and engagement

Report on Disclosure of Wrongdoing

Annual Report under Section 18 of the *Public Interest Disclosure of Wrongdoing Act*

The Public Interest Disclosure of Wrongdoing Act was proclaimed into law on December 20, 2011.

The Act provides for government employees to be able to come forward if they reasonably believe that a wrongdoing has been committed or is about to be committed and they are acting in good faith.

The Act also protects employees who do disclose from reprisals, by enabling them to lay a complaint of reprisal with the Labour Board.

A Wrongdoing for the purposes of this Act is:

a. A contravention of provincial or federal laws or regulations
b. A misuse or gross mismanagement of public funds or assets
c. An act or omission that creates an imminent risk of a substantial and specific danger to the life, health or safety of persons or the environment, or
d. Directing or counseling someone to commit a wrongdoing

During the 2015-2016 fiscal year, the Public Service Commission did not receive any disclosures of wrongdoing.

Information Required under Section 18 of the Act	Fiscal Year 2015-2016
The number of disclosures received	None
The number of findings of wrongdoing	None
Details of each wrongdoing	n/a
Recommendations and actions taken on each wrongdoing	n/a